

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1673

AMEMBASSY LONDON

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 162

E.O. QYTWC N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: LOYALIST GENERAL STRIKE: SEVENTH DAY

REF: BELFAST 161

1. PARAMILITARIES AND OTHERS ASSOCIATED WITH UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL (UAC) TODAY MAKING MOST DETERMINED EFFORT YET TO PREVENT WORKERS FROM REACHING JOBS. THEY DO NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO BE HAVING MUCH OVERALL SUCCESS DESPITE " WARNING" BY PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING PROSCRIBED ULSTER FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE THAT THEY COULD NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF WORKERS ON THE STREETS. EAST BELFAST, IN PROXIMITY OF HARLAND AND WOLFF SHIPYARD AND SHORT BROTHERS AIRCRAFT AND MISSILE FACTORY, IS MOST AFFECTED WITH ROADS BLOCKED BY HI-JACKED VEHICLES AND LARGE CROWDS OF MEN. MOST OF THE MAIN COMMUTER ROUTES INTO BELFAST ARE BLOCKED BY SUSPECT DEVICES. SOME RAIL ROUTES ALSO CLOSED. FARMERS ARE BLOCKING ROADS WITH TRACTORS IN AT LEAST FIVE AREAS OF THE PROVINCE. ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOLS NEAR PROTESTANT HOUSING PROJECTS IS AGAIN DOWN SHARPLY. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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NORMAL BUT IAN PAISLEY HAS CLAIMED THAT MAIN STATION AT BALLYLUMFORD COUNTY ANTRIM IS PRODUCING LESS POWER AND THAT OTHER STATIONS HAVE INCREASED PRODUCTION TO MAINTAIN NORMAL FLOW. ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY (RUC) IS CONCENTRATED IN PRIMARY TROUBLE AREAS. FOR FIRST TIME, ARMY UNITS, WITH ONLY TOKEN POLICE PRESENCE, ARE IN FOREFRONT AT SECONDARY SITES OF DISTURBANCES SUCH AS BELFAST SANDY ROW AND ANTRIM ROAD. PORT

OF LARNE STILL CLOSED AND MAIL DELIVERIES HAVE BEEN STOPPED IN SOME TOWNS. MOST BUS SERVICES ARE OPERATING ALTHOUGH ONE DRIVER SHOT AND TWO BUSES DAMAGED YESTERDAY. FEW MUNICIPAL SERVICES OPERATING AND GASOLINE STILL IN SHORT SUPPLY.

2. WEEKEND PASSED RELATIVELY PEACEFULLY. INDUSTRY OF COURSE LARGELY IDLE BUT PLANTS MAKING ARTIFICIAL FIBRES SUCH AS DU PONT AND MONSANTO CONTINUED 24-HOUR OPERATIONS. THERE A FEW INCENDIARY BOMBINGS AND SEVERAL BEATINGS AMONG ACTS OF REPRISAL ON SHOP AND SALOON KEEPERS WHO REFUSED TO CLOSE LAST WEEK. CENTER OF ACTIVITY WAS AROUND BALLYLUMFORD POWER STATION. IN SECRET BALLOT LATE AFTERNOON MAY 6 LARGE MAJORITY WORKERS (286-171) DECIDED NOT RPT NOT TO STRIKE. HOWEVER IAN PAISLEY REFUSED TO ACCEPT THIS RESULT AND CALLED ON THOSE VOTING FOR STRIKE TO RUN DOWN SUPPLIES. HE WITHDREW DEMAND WHEN WORKERS SAID THEY WOULD WALK OUT, CUTTING SUPPLIES COMPLETELY INCLUDING THOSE TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES. BALLYLUMFORD WORK FORCE IS DIVIDED ALONG SECTARIAN LINES WITH MANUAL WORKERS GENERALLY ROMAN CATHOLICS AND TECHNICIANS AND ENGINEERS MOSTLY PROTESTANTS. BELFAST ELECTRICITY WORKER BILLY KELLY, WHO KEY MAN PERSUADING WORKERS TO COME OUT IN 1974, COLLAPSED AND WAS HOSPITALIZED LAST WEEK AND HIS ABSENCE PROBABLY IMPORTANT TO UAC EFFORT. MPS CRAIG, BRADFORD, MC CUSKER AND MOLYNEAUX APPEARED AT STATION SATURDAY NIGHT TO ENCOURAGE WORKERS AND RUC FLOODED AREA AND NEARBY HOUSING PROJECTS TO PREVENT PHYSICAL INTIMIDATION OF WORKERS. LATEST PUBLIC STATEMENT OF BALLYLUMFORD WORKERS' SPOKESMAN REAFFIRMS ORIGINAL POSITION: IF REST OF WORKERS IN PROVINCE WANT TO WORK THE ELECTRICITY WORKERS WILL PROVIDE

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POWER. SO FAR DURING STRIKE SECURITY FORCES HAVE CLEARED 550 ROADBLOCKS AND CHARGED 61 PEOPLE WITH STRIKE-RELATED ILLEGALITIES. TWENTY THREE POLICEMEN HAVE BEEN INJURED.

3. PROVISIONAL IRA SEEMS TO BE USING STRIKE PERIOD TO MEND ITS FENCES IN REPUBLICAN AREAS. TWO RECENT KILLINGS WERE OF EX-SERVICEMEN AND THERE IS THEORY THAT CAMPAIGN IS ON TO WEED-OUT SUSPECTED INFORMERS.

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